



SALISBURY TOURISM AUTHORITY
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SALISBURY TOURISM AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Minutes
March 3, 2010

The Salisbury Tourism and Cultural Development Commission met in the second floor seminar room at 100 W. Innes Street/Plaza Building from 9 a.m. until 1:15 p.m. This meeting was posted on the doors of City Hall and on the City Web site under Special Meeting Notices. Today's agenda was emailed prior to the meeting.

In attendance were: Participants—Mr. Boris Bunich, Mr. Bill Burgin, Mr. Randy Hemann (Host), Mr. Mark Lewis, Ms. Barbara Perry, Ms. Michelle Patterson, Mr. David W. Redden, Mr. John Sofley, and Councilman Paul Woodson. Mr. James Meacham (Presenter), Mr. Warren Miller (Facilitator), Staff—Ms. Diana Moghrabi, Mr. Joe Morris, and Mr. Doug Paris (Observer)

Absent: Ms. Krista Osterweil

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Mark Lewis called the meeting to order and Randy Hemann went over housekeeping items. Joe Morris introduced Warren Miller of Fountainworks as the meeting facilitator. Mr. Miller will provide a report.

Warren Miller is founder and president of Fountainworks. He is well known in government and nonprofit circles for his leading-edge approaches to public opinion and market research. He has worked extensively with local, state and federal government agencies, nonprofit organizations and schools to develop deeper and more accurate insights about their citizens and stakeholders and translate those insights into organizational strategies and the development and marketing of services.

RESOLUTION OF LEGISLATIVE INTENT ESTABLISHING A PROCESS FOR THE FORMATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

(2)(d) to formulate a strategic plan that establishes mission, vision and goals of the Salisbury Tourism and Cultural Development Commission.

Rules of the Workshop

For these exercises, everyone must be present, everyone participates, listen for understanding, build on ideas, and focus on the task at hand. Ask yourself, “What does success look like for this project?”

Brainstorm—Ways this commission can improve the tourist’s experience to Salisbury

- Common unified, clear definition of mission, value and vision
- A plan that is easy to communicate
- Increased tourism to Salisbury
- Sustainable cultural resources
- Collaborative effort
- A plan that capitalizes on Salisbury’s uniqueness
- Salisbury as a destination with adequate facilities

Trends

Brainstorming the current trends in Salisbury

Artists are present in Salisbury (For example-The Railwalk, EastSquare Artists & Pottery 101.) City money is going toward a creative economy; Salisbury is recognized for history and arts. There is a strong cultural base here.

- Salisbury is a well-kept secret.
- It is an authentic small town.
- Social media, video conferencing and electronic marketing are a part of our lives today.
- People enjoy agritourism opportunities.
- Companies are going “green.”
- Rail travel is again growing in popularity. High-speed rail is in Salisbury’s future.

Economic Climate

Since the country is in a recession, Salisbury needs to demonstrate value. Gas prices are volatile. In this time of economic uncertainty, airlines are also struggling to keep business going.

Customer Needs

Customers are looking for value and do not want to travel too far.

Political Factors

- We have flexible legislation.
- The City and the County officials both recognize the importance of a Tourism Development Authority.
- The State of North Carolina values tourism.
- Under pressure, government makes the first cut to tourism.
- There is an understanding that hospitality brings jobs to the area.
- Salisbury is a grassroots, “bottom-up” community.
- The city is bringing “fiber to the home” (FTTH) to this community.

- There is a history of conflict between the city and the county that goes back to the founding of our community.
- There are some who feel hostile toward this commission.
- Salisbury has the ability to create a product.
- Salisbury has a successful track record in site development.

Partners

We have talented, knowledgeable members serving the STCDC—an excellent composition. We need to harness this energy.

Rowan County has three dedicated staff members, bricks and mortar, a broad perspective, a Web site and experience in tourism.

Other partners include (not limited to) Downtown Salisbury, Inc. (DSI), City staff/resources, cultural partners, Rowan County Chamber of Commerce, and Economic Development Director Robert Van Geons.

Who are our customers?

- Hotels
- Local businesses
- Restaurants
- Out-of-town guests (such as: overnight, day trippers, business travel, amateur sports, Jehovah's Witness training guests)

Visitors need an enhanced experience; Salisbury guests need to know how to plug in—what is here. Improvements can be made to the City Web site.

Visitors need easy access to entertainment, restaurants, the art district, and Wi-Fi.

- Implement the Cultural Action Plan
- Improve wayfinding
- Be able to seat 500 people
- Work on destination development.

Mission Statement

The Salisbury Tourism and Cultural Development Commission's mission is to promote Salisbury/Rowan to increase tourism by creating a positive, unique, and memorable visitor experience.

The mission statement is a single sentence that a 12-year-old can understand, is easy to recite from memory and states why the commission exists.

Values

Values represent the core priorities in an organizational culture including what drives its members' choices and behaviors—how they truly act in this organization.

Values are what we collectively believe; they drive “the what and why” of the actions we choose to take.

Values include those of the members, its customers or stakeholders, and the community as they reflect on the organization.

Look for 4-6 core values that are the heart of how the organization operates.

The participants narrowed the list to:

- Integrity/Ethical
- Transparent and accessible
- Collaborative
- Informed, creative, and strategic
- Passion for Salisbury/Rowan

JOINT MARKETING PROPOSAL: INCENTIVE TRAVEL PROGRAM

During the lunch, Rowan County TDA Executive Director James Meacham made a presentation to the STCDC. Mr. Meacham's handout covering the presentation will be included as an attachment. This presentation was requested at the February 15, 2010, regular meeting of the STCDC.

Randy Hemann made a MOTION to accept the offer from Rowan Tourism Development Authority. Paul Woodson seconded the motion with all members voting AYE. (8-0)

Vision Exercise

The vision is a compelling description of the state and function of the organization and its impact at a point in the future—more of an ideal future state.

The meeting broke into two groups to create a cover story for a magazine describing where Salisbury would like to be in five years.

It was a fun, creative exercise with visioning themes that included the following:

- Salisbury became a destination—in particular, a family destination.
- Salisbury had dining options.
- Salisbury had FTTH and other technology.
- Salisbury is “pulled together.”
- Expanding the business base
- People return to visit Salisbury.
- Salisbury is no longer a “best kept secret.”

- Salisbury has high-speed rail.
- Salisbury is known for their history and the Civil War Trail.
- Occupancy growth
- ADR Up
- Site Development
- Collaboration w/Cultural Partner
- Successful promotion
- Well-informed, prosperous hospitality
- Family-oriented activities
- Strong support RCVB

5 BOLD STEPS

It is the aim of the STCDC to accomplish the following by June 30, 2010.

- Listen to hotels, sites and attractions
- How do dual TDAs work? What are the Best Practices?
- Basic organizational issues resolved. (Committee structure, staggered terms, etc.)
- Hold a goals-setting session.
- Adopt a budget.

The next regular meeting of the STCDC will be March 24, 2010, at noon (lunch provided) in the Council Chamber.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Moghrabi

Joint Marketing Proposal: Incentive Travel Program

Program Goals:

- Increase the number of visitors to the destination, with a strong emphasis on overnight visitors.
- Create positive experiences for the visitor.
- Provide tourism partners (hotels, restaurants, retail, sites, attractions, events, etc.) the ability to cross-sell and up-sell local tourism product.
- Drive positive economic activity.
- Greater Brand Awareness.

Program Core Strategy:

- **Incentive Travel (Visitor Does X in order to Receive Y)**
 - Leverage local resources to drive additional overnight stays (both new and extended stays) by providing incentives for visitors to either book a hotel room, extend their stay and explore the destination.
 - Incentives can be developed in a "Bundle Strategy" which could include, but not limited to dining certificates, event tickets, gas cards, retail cards, attraction passes, gift baskets and outdoor activities.
 - Program can be used to drive greater attendance at site, attractions and events, whiling incentive visitors to stay overnight in addition to going to the event or attraction.

Program Structure and Implementation:

- Rowan County TDA proposes a joint task force made of equal representation from the Salisbury TDA and the Rowan TDA to oversee the development and implementation of the incentive travel program.
- Joint Task force would evaluate and set all distribution channels for both product delivery and marketing.
- Rowan County TDA staff would support the joint task force.
- Joint Task force would provide regular reports to the prospective Boards on the results of the program and implement measurement standards.

TDA Core Philosophy: *It All Begins With A Visit*